

Moon by KiyaSama

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Summary:

We know her as 'Eleven (11)' - a product of Cold War experiments. We've met 'Eight (8)', which tells us there are others out there. However, these special people must have originated from somewhere...from the first of their kind. Who is/was 'One (1)'?

This is a one-shot written to explore that possibility.

Moon

She was born with several nicknames -

The Ticking Time Bomb, The Living Disaster, She-Who-Should-Not-Have-Lived, An Experiment Gone Terribly Wrong (or Right depending on which circles you moved in), and The Single Greatest Achievement Ever Known.

Yet she sleeps.

For eighteen years, she has bided her time in the depths of the earth; several thousand miles beneath the cacophony of restless human feet, which trample over the labyrinth of lies being constructed almost daily. Her home is a husk of NASA-inspired steel with a combination of alloys created – *for her protection* - they say. Her memory banks filter through the random names the men and women in white and decorated uniforms have tossed around; titanium, vibranium, and adamantium just to name a few. They laugh in jest at their cunning and wonder if those comic artists are onto them already.

Yet she sleeps.

Once in a while, she's allowed to step out of her 'bedroom'; a floor to ceiling tank made of those special alloys and glass so thick, they are

sure she'll never be able to shatter it this time (not unlike the others she's destroyed over the years). The soluble, slimy, amniotic fluid is familiar to her skin now; having long stopped the use of ordinary water when her powers were capable of exploding said glass with a mere thought. She is allowed to breathe in this cocoon; though she floats in it like a doll dipped in soluble gel. There is limited freedom, but she saves her energy by curling into a fetal position. Her waist-length hair is pure snow and sprayed around her like tendrils desperately seeking sunlight.

Yet she sleeps.

She does imagine how the *real* sun would feel upon her skin; and not the artificial rays they shower upon her whenever they feel generous. She is suitably pale; a pallid complexion that reminds one of papier-mâché in its crudest form.

Yet she sleeps.

Her unblemished naked body; firm and full in all the right places, is a living pin cushion with wires and tubes stuck to every bit of available flesh they can find. There are electrodes taped across her forehead, with said tubes – of all shapes and sizes – drifting like elongated snakes toward massive terrifying machines which light up with excitement at any possible 'activity' from her. Data flies across computer grid papers, screens beep with dots and lines that monitor her strengths and weaknesses, while squiggly lines go up and down and up and down with every breath she takes through a mask that covers her nose and mouth; for even when she breathes, it is an important event to record.

Yet she sleeps.

At a certain hour, a particular tube pokes its way through the fluid and finds a spot not punished in a while. The needle is barely felt, but the result is always the same. The quick flow of her blood seeps its way through the narrow cylinder into a collection of test tubes awaiting new test subjects. It would be watered down and injected into her 'clones'- more and more experiments needed to see how well they fare with a taste of her powers.

She weakens after each draw, and perhaps she ought to be grateful they at least give her a few days to recover before making another attempt.

She thinks she's losing count of how many of 'her' are out there now, but she is still able to reach out to some of them when she dreams. She can see their faces – her 'children', you might say.

They are, at first, mere shadows floating in the periphery of her mind; as if she seeks to find their full form through a dense mist that attempts to prevent their meeting. The Dark Void is usually the best place to make direct contact, but she knows it's dangerous making herself visible to them. She's content to watch from afar and to see how well they adjust to a life no longer theirs.

It's almost always the same procedure; the young ones – some stolen from mothers at birth – and injected with her blood/serum in addition to their other unspeakable tests. Their goal is to make a stronger version of her; an even better and more obedient version of her. Several efforts end in disaster; many of the children never living past the age of one. However, there are the 'lucky' ones; those resilient infants who survive the harsh stages of 'training' and grow up to become emotionless robots designated to foreign nations

willing to purchase them for a certain price.

The Cold War is upon them after all.

However, there are the rebels in the midst; those who fight back and seek their freedom no matter the cost. She is able to reach into their thoughts, and perhaps...just maybe she feeds them a little more of herself so they can go to places she's only imagined.

On the wicked streets of Philadelphia, one stumbles into a gang she protects while seeking justice to those who have done her wrong. Her illusionary abilities are excellent, but crude compared to her 'mother's' abilities. In the cold wasteland of Siberia, another is able to set things on fire with just a thought, and right now he runs in fear of his life for his creators are desperately after him. In the claustrophobic streets of Sao Paolo, another hides in the belly of an underground home with friends who are aware of her ability to levitate. She is sometimes worshipped as a goddess, but her tears of sorrow at night strike a chord in her 'mother's' heart.

The strands of her memories stretch closer to home; to a place called Hawkins, Indiana, where one has come to settle. This one seems to be the strongest of them yet, and her escape has left many of her creators quite concerned. She is called 'El' by her friends, and oh, what wonderful friends they are. How lucky she is to have found a family to call her own. El has suffered greatly, yes, but she has proven to be a worthy and reliable offspring. She shows much promise, and one only wonders how far she'll go with the positive influence of those who love and cherish her presence.

Unfortunately, all is not as it seems in Hawkins, for the strange happenings in that little town have filtered into the ears of their

governmental colleagues.

The subtle panicked atmosphere is a reflection of the mess they have created; their silly prodding into the unknown awakening sleeping monsters beneath a world they thought they once knew.

On their chunky machinery, buttons and gizmos begin flickering with excitement as her breathing and pulse quickens; her dreams now diving into the place the Hawkins Team have nicknamed 'The Upside Down'. She sees it again. That thing that takes up the fiery sky in a world decayed and rotting from its core. It roars in rage at being diverted once again from its quest to sink its teeth into the real world, and perhaps it's aware that *she* is the one really responsible for giving that 'El' girl the extra strength needed to close the gate.

But there will be other gates, she thinks as her eyes dance feverishly behind closed lids. There will be so many more and it will find other ways to return. So I must remain strong for her...for all of them. My children who will all have to eventually find a way to defeat the Darkness coming.

She takes a deep breath and slows her heart rate; giving the illusion to the curious ones that she's falling asleep again. Easily, so easily, she slips into the Void – that empty hole so pitch black that nothing but her main focus can be seen.

In here, she can walk on legs that are strong and capable; her bare feet almost soundless on the puddles of water she steps on. She has no time to construct clothing for this 'dream', so she's content in a simple shift dress reminiscent of a drab hospital gown.

Before her, her protégé El sleeps peacefully on her bed in a cabin. There is a small smile of content on her face as she clutches a teddy bear to her chest. She is happy because her best friend (her boyfriend?) named Mike took her to an ice cream parlor and they spent most of the day together...without the others. They are becoming closer and closer, for this relationship means the most to her. Though she cares just as much for her 'father' – the sheriff called Hopper – and her adopted friends; Lucas, Dustin, Will, and Max; nothing compares to her feelings for Mike. She loves him and would do anything for him.

Protect him, she speaks without a sound. She makes the motion of caressing El's hair, which is much longer now. *Protect them for you will be needed more than ever quite soon, my dear.*

She believes she can transfer more of her powers to El, but when her protégé's lashes suddenly fly open; and innocent wide brown eyes meet her startling blue ones, she panics at this unforeseen development.

She can see me!

El would only get a chance to whisper "You..." in awe, before she is yanked back to reality with a shriek of dismay.

The amniotic fluid bubbles furiously with her frustration and she thrashes against the wires and tubes connected to her. The scientists fret as the temperature in the tank rises above a thousand degrees in less than a minute yet her skin shows no sign of damage from the blistering heat. Her eyes open wide and she stretches out a hand toward the glass. There is a slight crack as the pressure mounts, though her head feels like it's being squeezed like a sponge, for the

scientists have done their homework and they are aware of her limits.

However, she presses on, or would have if it wasn't for the sudden bark of a familiar voice to shatter through her moment of rage.

“Moon!”

Just like that, her fury dissipates like a puff of smoke and tears spring to her eyes.

Pa-Papa.

She lowers her hand in shame and the bubbles settle down until the temperature reaches its tolerable rate.

She hitches in a deep breath and stares at the man beyond the glass; he with the gray hair and the kind countenance that's now laced with disappointment at her antics. She never wants him to feel that way about her, and it hurts worse than all the experiments they could ever do.

Papa. I'm so sorry.

He nods as if understanding her silent plea and reaches out to touch the glass tenderly. She presses her hand against his; wishing the barrier was not between them, but it would have to do for now until she was released. Spending time with him – no matter how little – is almost always the highlight of her dreary days.

He motions toward someone on his right, and turning back to her - now with a warm smile on his face - she feels the first jolt of the serum being injected into the back of her neck again. Weariness, like a heavy cloak, envelopes her almost immediately where her body curls into its fetal position again as her lashes drift closed.

She will fall asleep and dream of her many children; praying that more of them will eventually follow the path of the one named 'El' in Hawkins, Indiana.

Perhaps one day I'll see you all and hold you in my arms. I will tell you how brave you really are, and how proud I am of you. Never give up hope, my dear ones, for one day, we'll truly be free.

Love always,

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